

**Iowa Status**

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

cottonwood

Populus deltoides

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Anthophyta - flowering
plants

Features

The cottonwood tree may grow to 100 feet tall. Its bark is smooth and gray when young, becoming furrowed at maturity. The terminal bud is sticky. The simple leaves are arranged alternately along the branch. Each leaf is triangular, pointed at the tip, and up to six inches long. Male flowers (on reddish spikes) and female flowers (on yellow-green spikes) are located on separate trees. Flowers open in the spring before the leaves unfold. The fruits form in oval (ellipsoid) capsules that may be up to one-third inch long.

Natural History

The cottonwood grows in bottomland woods, along streams, and in wet areas. It flowers from March through April. Male cottonwoods are planted for ornamental purposes due to their fast growth and lack of seeds.

Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; bottomland forests; interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; natural lakes and prairie marshes